

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A check valve, comprising:
 - a valve casing, the valve casing being formed with an inlet, a valve chest having a diameter larger than that of the inlet, and an outlet;
 - an annular valve seat formed between the inlet and the valve chest;
 - a valve element disposed within the valve chest to open and close the annular valve seat, wherein a recess is formed in the valve element on the inlet side;
 - a valve stem projectingly provided on an inlet side of the valve element; and
 - a guide member with which an outer periphery of the valve stem is in sliding contact, wherein: the guide member is provided at inner ends of ribs that project into the valve chest from an inner wall of the inlet, and a the recess is formed in the valve element being formed to receive therein the ribs projecting into to the valve chest side and also to receive the guide member;
 - an outlet-side of the valve stem projectingly provided on the outlet side of the valve element; and
 - an outlet-side guide member with which an outer periphery of the outlet-side valve stem is in sliding contact;
 - characterized in that
 - the length of the valve stem is about equal to the distance between the valve inlet and the valve outlet in the valve casing; and
 - the outlet-side of the valve stem projects out of the valve casing when said check valve is in the fully open position.